

SECTION B: REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated August 28, 2003.

Claims 1-6, 8-10, and 12-20 were pending in this application. Claims 1-6, 8-10, and 12-20 have been cancelled, herein, without prejudice.

A request for a one-month extension of time and appropriate fee are enclosed. If necessary, please charge any deficit, or credit any surplus to Deposit Account No. 01-1960.

I. INTRODUCTION

The drawings were objected to for being unclear and containing informalities.

Claims 10, 11, 14, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US patent No. 4,226,164 issued to Carter (herein after "Carter"). Claims 1, 10 and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over GB 771,968 issued to Steer-Webster (herein after "Steer-Webster"), in view of Carter. Claims 1 and 10-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Steer-Webster in view of US patent No. 5,937,885 issued to Sampson (herein after "Sampson").

II. AMENDMENTS TO ACCEPT ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant notes with appreciation the subject matter deemed allowable in Claims 2-5, 6, 8, and 9. The amendments made herein are done so in conformity with the comments of the previous Office Action. This amendment seeks to simply cancel non-allowable claims containing non-allowable subject matter, without prejudice to the filing of later divisional applications, and cancel claims containing allowable subject matter.

while adding new, identical claims re-presenting the allowable subject matter. Further dependent claims were added as detailed below.

New Claim 21 is identical to allowable Claim 2 that is canceled herein. New Claims 22-24 are identical to allowable Claims 3-5 that are canceled herein. Claims 25-27 add further limitations to the allowable subject matter of Claim 21.

New Claim 28 is identical to allowable Claim 6 that is canceled herein without prejudice. Claims 29 through 32 add further limitations to the allowable subject matter of Claim 28.

III. DRAWINGS CORRECTION

The drawings were objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for failing to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. First, claim 8 recited the “coupler of claim 7, wherein the sectors may be resiliently pried and separated with a sharp blade of a common tool after the snap locking action.” Claim 8 has been canceled herein, without prejudice.

Next, the drawings were objected to because a bracket should embrace the illustrations of Figs. 1 and 2, and lead lines are missing from reference numbers 25a and 38b. Also reference number 26b is referred to in the specification but not illustration.

Applicant has submitted corrected drawings herewith, in conformity with the rejection and MPEP 608.02., by specifically adding brackets to Figs. 1 and 2, adding lead lines to reference numbers 25a and 38b, and adding reference character 26b to Fig. 1.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the above amendments placing all claims in condition for allowance, applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. Applicant encourages the Examiner to telephone the undersigned attorney if it appears that a telephone conference would facilitate allowance of the application.

Certificate of Mailing

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on December 23, 2003

Carolen Merkley

Carolen Merkley
Signature
December 23, 2003

Respectfully submitted,



Richard L. Myers
Registration No. 26,490
Myers Dawes Andras & Sherman LLP
19900 MacArthur Blvd., Suite 1150
Irvine, CA 92612
(949) 223-9600